NATION

Red alert issued as heavy rains batter Kerala

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

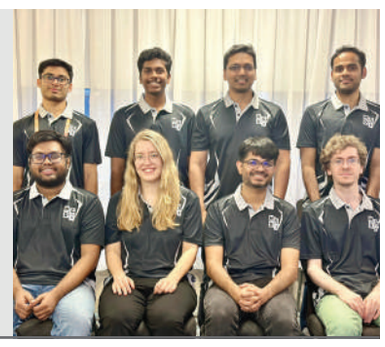
Foreign investors infuse Rs 3,346.94 cr in mkts

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Team MGD1 1st Indians to win FIDE World Championship

≫ Page: 8 ≪



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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 15 JUNE 2025 | SUNDAY| BENGALURU | 18 DHU AL-HIJJAH, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 161 | Pages: 8

High-level panel to probe plane crash

Death toll reaches 274; Cockpit Voice Recorder still missing; Panel to recommend new SOPs

AHMEDABAD / NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The death toll from the crash of a London-bound Air India flight in Ahmedabad has risen to 274, officials confirmed on Saturday. The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner (AI171) went down shortly after take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Thursday, crashing into the BJ Medical College hostel and canteen complex in the Meghaninagar area.

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered "extended surveillance" of all Boeing 787 aircraft operated by the Tata-owned airline. Among the deceased were 241 passengers and crew onboard, with another 29 fatalities on the ground, including five MBBS students.

This marks India's worst aviation disaster in over three decades. The crash site remains under intense investigation as experts search for clues amid the wreckage.

Investigators are examining several possible causes, including dual engine thrust loss, multiple bird strikes, or potential flap failure. The Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR), commonly known as the Black Box, was recovered from the rooftop of the hostel building on Friday. However, the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR), which captures pilot communication and cockpit sounds, remains missing.

Naidu assured that India maintains "very strict aviation safety standards" and pledged that "everything will be done" to enhance them further.

In response to the tragedy, the Central Hovernment has constituted a high-level, multi-disciplinary investigation panel chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan. The committee will meet for the first time on Monday and aims to submit its findings within three months. The panel will investigate the root cause of the crash and contributing factors, including mechanical failure, human error, weather, and regulatory compliance.

The committee will also recommend improvements to safety protocols, formulate new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and incorporate global best practices to prevent similar incidents. It will assess the effectiveness of emergency responses and rescue coordination, and have full access to flight data, maintenance records, ATC logs, and witness testimonies. The Ministry of Civil Aviation clarified that this panel will not replace other ongoing inquiries by statutory bodies. The committee may also include aviation experts, accident investigators, and legal advisors. Rescue workers continue to recover human remains from the crash site. Additional Chief Fire Officer Jayesh Khadia confirmed that more body parts were retrieved from the canteen rubble on Friday, and one full body was found on Saturday morning. Efforts are ongoing to identify victims through DNA matching. Authorities at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital have identified six bodies using DNA, while eight others were identified and handed over to families. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2, 3 & 5

Crashed AI plane's check was due in December; right-side engine overhauled in March

Wreckage of the plane being lifted through a crane, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Air India to give Rs 25 lakh aid to kin of deceased

Air India on Saturday announced it will provide an interim payment of Rs 25 lakh to the families of the deceased and survivors of the Ahmedabad plane crash.
This interim payment is in addition to the Rs 1 crore compensation already announced by the parent company, Tata Sons, Air India said in a statement.

Coffins of the crash victims brought to the mortuary of the Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

PM to visit Croatia, Cyprus and Canada

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a three-nation tour starting Sunday, during which he will participate in the G7 Summit in Canada, and visit Cyprus and Croatia to strenghten India's bilateral cooperation with these two countries. While in Croatia, where Modi will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Plenkovic and meet President Zoran Milanovic. Modi will visit Cyprus on 15-16 June , where he will hold talks with President Christodoulides and address business leaders at Limassol. He will travel to Kananaskis in Canada on 16 June-17 to participate in the G7 Summit at the invitation of Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney. This would be the Prime Minister's sixth consecutive participation in the G7 Summit. The forthcoming meeting will offer an important opportunity to exchange views and "explore pathways" to reset bilateral ties between India and Canada. —*PTI*

Axiom-4 now eyes 19 June lift-off

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The much-delayed Axiom-4 commercial mission to the International Space Station, carrying Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and three others, is now targeting a launch on 19 June, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced on Saturday. The Axiom Space mission was to blast-off from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on 11 June, but had to be delayed first due to a fuel leak in SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket and then due to a leak in the Russian section of the International Space Station.—*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Rajasthan's Mahesh Kumar tops NEET-UG

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Rajasthan's Mahesh Kumar has topped the medical entrance exam NEET-UG, while Utkarsh Awadhiya from Madhya Pradhesh has bagged the second rank, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Saturday. More than 12.36 lakh candidates out of 22.09 lakh test takers qualified the exam. The number is down from last year's 13.15 lakh qualifying candidates. However, the number of test takers was also higher last year at over 23.33 lakh. Among the qualifying candidates this year, over 7.2 lakh are females while over 5.14 lakh are males.—*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Rains lash Bengaluru on Saturday, with cloudy weather bringing a chill to the City ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

RED ALERT ON AS RAIN POUNDS COASTAL KARNATAKA

MANGALURU, 14 JUNE

The India Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for coastal Karnataka, including Dakshina Kannada district, as relentless rainfall since Saturday afternoon severely disrupted daily life.

In Mangaluru City, several low-lying areas reported heavy waterlogging. Roads beneath the Pumpwell flyover were submerged, causing major traffic disruptions. A bus broke down on a flooded stretch, prompting passengers and locals to push it to safety. Streets in Car Street, Lower Bendur, Kottara, and other areas witnessed extensive inundation, while the Padil railway underpass and parts of Car Street faced severe flooding, affecting vehicle movement. Rainwater also entered several homes in low-lying residential areas.

While earlier red alerts this week saw limited rainfall, Friday's downpour was intense, and the IMD predicts further heavy rains, with the alert in place until the morning of 16 June.

District highway authorities have restricted the movement of two-and three-wheelers along a key stretch of National Highway-66 between Suratkal and Nantoor Junction, citing safety concerns. Authorities have diverted these vehicles to service roads until September 2025. —*PTI*

Israel hits Iran's gas field; Tehran, US talks called off

DUBAI, 14 JUNE

An Israeli drone struck a refinery in Iran's South Pars gas field on Saturday, according to semi-official Iranian news agencies.

If confirmed, this would mark Israel's first attack on Iran's oil and natural gas industry. Israel has not immediately acknowledged the strike, which reportedly targeted Phase 14 of the gas field that Iran shares with Qatar across the Persian Gulf. These facilities are normally protected by air defence systems, which Israel has been targeting since Friday.

In a video message on Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to intensify strikes on Iran. "Soon, Israeli Air Force planes will fly over Tehran. We will strike every site and every target of the Ayatollahs' regime," he declared. Netanyahu justified the ongoing Operation Rising Lion as an effort to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions and ballistic missile programme.

The conflict escalated on Friday after Israeli strikes hit Iran's nuclear programme and military complexes in Tehran. Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks on Israel overnight, killing at least three people and wounding dozens. Iran's UN Ambassador reported 78 deaths and over 320 injuries in the Israeli strikes. Explosions lit the skies over Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, with multiple missiles and drones intercepted by Israel's military. In Tel Aviv, seven people were wounded, and one woman was killed. In Rishon Lezion, two civilians died, and 19 were injured after an Iranian missile struck residential areas. Damage to homes was extensive. Oman says talks between Iran and the US over THE nuclear programme "will not now take place". —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 4, 5, 6 & 7

Israeli Iron Dome air defense system fires to intercept missiles over Tel Aviv, Israel ***PHOTO: PTI***

MEA issues emergency contact for Indians

The Indian Embassy in Iran has issued emergency contact details and advised Indians here to remain vigilant, avoid unnecessary movements and observe safety protocols following the launch of Israel's strikes on the country. "The emergency contact details of the Embassy: +98 9128109115; +98 9128109109," the Indian Embassy in Iran on Friday posted on X.

SA beat Aussies to win ICC Test C'ship

LONDON, 14 JUNE

South Africa won the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final in dramatic fashion, defeating defending champions Australia by five wickets at Lord's on Saturday. The triumph marked South Africa's first major ICC title in 27 years, ending decades of near-misses and heartbreak on cricket's biggest stage. Resuming on 213-2, the Proteas chased down the remaining 69 runs. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

South Africa's Captain Temba Bavuma holds the trophy and celebrates after their win in the World Test Championship ***PHOTO: PTI***

AFTER PAHALGAM ATTACK

J&K tourists spots to reopen on 17 June

SRINAGAR, 14 JUNE

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said the parks at tourist places, which were closed in view of security considerations after the Pahalgam attack, are being reopened in a phased manner to allow tourists to visit the destinations.

Some destinations will be reopened in the first phase from 17 June.

"Some places were closed after 22 April (attack)..... in a phased manner," Sinha said.

The lieutenant governor said this while visiting the Nunwan Base Camp of the annual Amarnath Yatra in Pahalgam in Kashmir's Anantnag district.

The destinations that will reopened for tourists in the first phase include Beetab Valley and the parks near Pahalgam market, Verinag, Kokernag and Achabal gardens in Anantnag district.

In Srinagar, Badamwari Park, Duck Park near Nigeen and Taqdeer Park near Hazratbal will also be reopened in the first phase.

Sarthal and Dhaggar in Kathua, Devipindi, Siyad Baba and Sula Park in Reasi, Guldanda and Jai valley in Doda, and Pancheri in Udhampur in Jammu region will be reopened.

A committee comprising of the divisional commissioners and IGPs of both regions will take reports from districts and decide on reopening more places in consultations with the state Tourism Department.

Commenting on the Amarnath Yatra that is scheduled to begin on 3 July, the lieutenant governor said that stringent security arrangements have been made and appealed to people to come here in large numbers. —*PTI*

Shikara wallas take part in a 'Shikara Race', organised to promote tourism in the valley at Dal Lake in Srinagar ***PHOTO: PTI***

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Water released from Basava Sagar reservoir

YADGIR, 14 JUNE

Authorities have released 5,000 cusecs of water from the Basavasagar reservoir into the Krishna River following a significant rise in inflow. Located at Narayanpur in Hunsagi taluk of Yadgir district, the reservoir currently holds 27.80 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) of water, against its full storage capacity of 33.33 TMC. The reservoir is presently receiving an inflow of 20,000 cusecs. As a precaution, one gate has been opened to release the excess water into the Krishna River. Officials from Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited have issued an advisory urging residents living along the riverbanks to stay away from the river and avoid taking livestock near the water. The situation is being closely monitored to manage water levels and ensure public safety. ***—Salar News***

PHOTO: PTI

CM will step down after Nov, claims BJP MLC

MYSURU, 14 JUNE

Former minister and BJP MLC H Vishwanath on Saturday claimed that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will step down after November, his Deputy DK Shivakumar or AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge likely to replace him. Speaking at a press conference, Vishwanath criticised Siddaramaiah for not implementing the caste census conducted by the H Kantharaj Commission. He alleged the CM, fearing party high command, has ordered a fresh survey within 90 days — an unrealistic timeline, as schools have reopened and teachers won't be available as enumerators. He predicted the new survey would drag on until March or April next year, by which time Siddaramaiah would be out of office. Vishwanath also expressed doubts over the government's intent to complete the survey. ***—Salar News***

Most unfortunate & tragic: Moily on AI-171 crash

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Congress leader M Veerappa Moily on Saturday expressed grief over the loss of lives in AI-171 crash and said it was an "unfortunate" and "tragic" incident that shook faith of people. He said "It is the most unfortunate and tragic incident. It has shaken the faith and confidence of people. We will learn further information after the evidence, is probed. An inquiry will be conducted, and proper action will be taken."***—ANI***

Transform Kalyana K'taka like B'luru, Mysuru: Kharge

CM says govt has allocated Rs 13,000 cr for region's dvpt

YADGIR, 14 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar at at a public event in Yadgir ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday urged State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar to transform the Kalyana State region -- which is considered backward in terms of development -- like Mysuru and Bengaluru.

Speaking at a public event in Yadgir to lay the foundation stone for projects under the Rs 440 crore "Arogya Avishkara" health scheme, Kharge emphasised the need to accelerate development in the region, considered one of State's most backward. He urged the government to focus on filling vacancies, particularly of teachers, and said the law permits recruitment in the region without financial constraints.

He pointed out that while Rs 5,000 crore had been allocated for the region this year, the funds must be utilised efficiently. "Funds are being provided, but they must be spent properly and on time. Otherwise, development will not reach the people," he said, appealing to local legislators and officials to ensure timely implementation.

CM highlighted that Rs 13,000 crore has been allocated over the past three years to Kalyana State Region Development Board, of which Rs 5,300 crore has already been spent. "The benefits of these projects have reached the people. In addition, we are providing department-wise funds for various schemes in the region. Steps are also being taken to fill vacant government posts in this region," he said.

He announced a Rs 847 crore plan to expand healthcare, including upgrading 42 hospitals and constructing new ones. The newly launched "Arogya Avishkara" scheme, with an outlay of Rs 440.63 crore, aims to improve health infrastructure and services across the region.

Siddaramaiah said the Congress government is fulfilling its election promises and the objectives of the Nanjundappa Report. "Funds are being allocated for health, education, employment, and basic infrastructure. We've already implemented the 'Akshara Avishkara' programme in education and now, 'Arogya Avishkara' for health," he noted.

He criticised the BJP for its alleged neglect of the region and for opposing Article 371(J), which grants special status to Kalyana Karnataka. He credited former prime minister Manmohan Singh, along with leaders Kharge and late Dharam Singh, for ensuring its implementation.

"Our government is committed to comprehensive development. We follow the ideals of Basavanna — we act as we speak," CM said, adding State ranks second in country for GST collection, a testament to State's financial strength. *—Salar News with Agencies*

> **Our government is carrying out developmental works in the field of education, health, roads, rural development, employment, etc. We have laid the foundation stone for various works in healthcare worth Rs 416 crore**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM

'ACT OF CREATING TERROR'

NIA begins probe into Suhas Shetty murder

MANGALURU, 14 JUNE

A National Investigation Agency (NIA) team arrived here on Saturday to formally take over the investigation into the murder of Hindu activist Suhas Shetty, who was killed in Bajpe town on 1 May.

The team, led by NIA deputy superintendent of police Pawan Kumar, has begun coordinating with local police.

Mangaluru police said preliminary information has been shared with the city crime branch officials.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs recently transferred the case to the NIA, directing it to investigate the "targeted killing" of Shetty describing it as an act intended to "create terror in the minds of people".

Citing a Home Ministry communique in this regard, the sources said the accused involved in the murder case are allegedly members of the Popular Front of India (PFI), a banned outfit.

Several state BJP leaders have demanded an NIA probe into the murder.

Police sources said Shetty was allegedly murdered by a group of eight youths, with suspected links to the banned PFI.

According to police the Investigating officer of the CCB is processing the handing over of the case to the NIA. *—PTI*

FATHERLY LOVE

Ahead of Father's Day, fathers in the City were seen spending time with their children on Saturday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

LAD GIVES RS 5L TO RAIN DEATH VICTIM'S FAMILY

HUBBALI, 14 JUNE

State Labour Minister Santosh Lad on Saturday handed over a compensation amount of Rs 5 lakh to the family of Husensaab Kalas, who tragically drowned in rainwater near Mavanur Road on the outskirts of Hubballi on Wednesday night.

Speaking to reporters, Minister Lad stated that two people have lost their lives in the district in the past 48 hours due to rain-related incidents. "One was a road accident where three individuals attempted to cross a flooded bridge in a tractor despite heavy rains, resulting in one fatality. The second was Kalas, who fell into an open drainage channel concealed by rainwater and drowned," he said. He added that CM is closely monitoring the situation.

The local Tehsildar, Kallangouda Patil, confirmed that Fire Services have been conducting a search operation for over 10 hours. Kalas had reportedly left for his farm amidst the downpour; only his slippers have been recovered.

Hubballi received 150 mm of rain overnight, leading to waterlogging in low-lying areas and the closure of schools. *—ANI*

DESI BIJOTSAVA

Visitors and exhibitors at the Institute of Agricultural Technologists in Bengaluru marking the inaugural day of Desi Bijotsava, an exhibition of desi seeds, organic, & value-added products on Saturday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

NEW CASTE SURVEY TO MISLEAD PUBLIC, SAYS VIJAYENDRA

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

State BJP President BY Vijayendra on Saturday accused the Congress-led State government of attempting to divert public attention from the recent stampede tragedy by announcing a fresh socio-educational survey. The 4 June stampede, which occurred during celebrations following the RCB team's IPL victory, claimed 11 lives.

Vijayendra criticised CM Siddaramaiah for reversing his earlier position on the 2015 Kantharaju Committee caste census, which was never implemented amid internal opposition and concerns over outdated data. He questioned rationale behind initiating a survey despite Centre already planning caste enumeration in upcoming national census, and doubted the legal standing of such a State-led exercise.

He also slammed the formation of Special Action Force—described as an "anti-communal force"—in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Shivamogga districts, alleging it was intended to target Hindus and BJP supporters under the guise of maintaining communal harmony.

In response to CM's criticism of the Centre at recent Finance Commission meeting—where the CM claimed State receives only 15 paise for every rupee contributed—Vijayendra said the remarks were an attempt to shift blame for the state's financial and developmental shortcomings. *—PTI*

OVER THOUSANDS FAMILIES AFFECTED

Sour season for Kolar farmers as Andhra bans mango entry

KOLAR, 14 JUNE

Mango growers in Kolar district, particularly in Srinivasapur taluk, are facing severe hardship due to a sharp fall in procurement prices and a trade ban imposed by Andhra Pradesh.

With mango cultivation spread across nearly 45,000 hectares in the district, the slump has impacted thousands of families who are directly or indirectly dependent on the crop.

Srinivasapur hosts one of the largest mango markets in the country, drawing traders from across India during the peak season from May to July. State itself grows mangoes on 1.39 lakh hectares and produces an average of 11 lakh tonnes annually. Of this, only around 4 lakh tonnes are sold directly to consumers, while the rest is used for by-products like juice, jam and pickles.

However, due to limited pulp extraction units in State, most of the pulp processing is carried out in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, particularly in Chittoor and Madanapalli.

The Andhra Pradesh government's recent decision to ban the entry of mangoes from Karnataka has left growers with no takers for industrial varieties like Tothapuri and Benisha, grown in abundance in Kolar.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has written to his Andhra counterpart N Chandrababu Naidu, urging him to lift the ban, warning of its adverse socio-economic impact on border area farmers.

Chinnappa Reddy, President of the Kolar District Mango Growers' Association, said he had never seen such low prices for Tothapuri mangoes, blaming the lack of demand from Chittoor-based juice factories.

Currently, mangoes in Srinivasapur are selling at just Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per MT, compared to Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 in previous years ***PHOTO: SALAR***

He noted that while table varieties like Raspuri, Badam and Mallika still find buyers in open markets, most growers rely on industrial demand for the bulk of their produce.

Currently, mangoes in Srinivasapur are selling at just Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per MT, compared to Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 in previous years.

Following a bandh in Srinivasapur, district-in-charge Minister Byrathi Suresh convened an emergency meeting with mango growers and officials. Farmers demanded a minimum procurement price of Rs 15,000 per metric tonne, including state support.

The minister reportedly assured them that he would take up the issue at the cabinet level.

An official from the Horticulture Department explained that juice factories are unwilling to buy more mangoes as they still have stock from last year. Additionally, there has been a decline in mango juice consumption, with consumers turning to alternatives like tomato juice, which is cheaper.

Farmers such as Venkataramana from Holur say they are reluctant to harvest their crop, as the market price barely covers the cost of labour and transport. Small traders have begun buying mangoes directly from farms at just Rs 2.5 per kg, a desperate alternative many farmers are now accepting.

Narayanaswamy of Rajoenahalli, who has grown mangoes on five acres, urged the Karnataka government to provide a support price of Rs 5 per kg, similar to the Rs 4 support price offered in Andhra Pradesh.

HS Sridhar of Holur suggested that the government set up mango processing units, preferably under public-private partnership models, to reduce reliance on Andhra's factories and cut transport costs.

Viswanath KN from Doddakurubarahalli also called for establishing processing units through the cooperative sector, highlighting that such initiatives could cover other crops like tomatoes and tamarind, which are widely grown in the region. *—Salar News*

AI safety checks 9 787s, warns delays as 24 still pending

Airline to do away with flight number 171

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Air India on Saturday said it has done one-time safety checks on nine of its Boeing 787 Dreamliners and is on track to complete the checks on the remaining 24 such planes as directed by aviation regulator DGCA. Air India and Air India Express will do away with flight number '171'.

In the wake of the fatal crash of Air India's Boeing 787-8 plane in Ahmedabad on Thursday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday ordered enhanced safety checks of the aircraft fleet.

"Some of these checks could lead to higher turnaround time and potential delays on certain long-haul routes especially those to airports with operating curfews. Customers will be duly notified about any delays," the airline said on X.

"These checks are being carried out on the Boeing 787 fleet as they return to India, before being cleared for their next operation. Air India has completed such checks on nine of the Boeing 787 aircraft and are on track to complete this process for the remaining 24 aircraft within the timeline provided by the regulator," the airline said.

The carrier had 26 legacy Boeing 787-8s and seven Boeing 787-9s in its fleet.

On the name change, sources said it is a general practice that airlines stop using particular flight numbers after fatal flight accidents.

From 17 June onwards, the flight number of Ahmedabad-London Gatwick will be 'AI 159' instead of 'AI 171'. The required changes to the booking system were made on Friday, a source said.

Another source said that Air India Express has also decided to do away with its flight number 'IX 171' —*PTI*

No direct flight leads to family's tragic end

Javed Ali Syed, a manager at a London-based hotel, had come to India with his three family members to meet his ailing mother, but could not book a direct return flight from Mumbai and decided to reach the UK capital via Ahmedabad - a decision that turned fatal for them. Sayed, his wife Mariam, and their two children – Zayn, 6, and Amani, 4, - were on the flight. They came to visit Sayed's mother who is undergoing treatment for a heart condition.

Indore woman's surprise visit ends in tragedy

In a tragic twist of fate, an Indore woman's loving gesture to celebrate her husband's birthday ended in unthinkable sorrow. Harpreet Kaur Hora advanced her flight to London, only to become one of the 241 passengers on the ill-fated plane. For Harpreet,28, IT professional working in Bengaluru, the journey to London was meant to be a joyous reunion as her husband, Robbie Hora, awaited her arrival there. Initially, Harpreet had planned to fly on 19 June, but a desire to make his birthday unforgettable prompted her to switch to the earlier flight.

Man died after immersing wife's ashes

Arjun Patoliya, a UK-based resident, returned to India for a solemn ritual of immersing his wife's ashes in the Narmada river, unaware that it would be his last duty performed for his family. He left his two young daughters, aged 4 and 8, orphaned. Barely two weeks ago, Arjun's wife, Bharti, died in London after a prolonged illness. Arjun, 36, hailed from Gujarat's Amreli district, had been living in London with his family.

'NOTE THE WHISTLEBLOWERS'

Engines lost power at critical stage: Ex-Air Force chief

KOLKATA, 14 JUNE

Former chief of air staff, air chief Marshal Arup Raha (reired), on Saturday said the engine of the Air India aircraft definitely" lost power at a critical stage and there was no time for recovery.

He said there could be many other possibilities for the crash such as fuel contamination, and glitches in software and control systems.

"As of now, it is very difficult to say what has gone wrong," Raha said on the sidelines of an event. "Definitely there was loss of power and at a critical stage... you are transmitting from the ground into the air, your height is little. There is no time for recovery. And loss of engine power will result in a stall... (The aircraft) will then descend very rapidly and crash. And that is what has happened".

He said the engines of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner generate thrust and losing the power of both engines simultaneously is very rare - "may be one in a billion cases".

"There might be a software issue, some problem in the control (system), fuel contamination... But I do not give any credence to the sabotage angle. The loss of power was an indication of some glitch," Raha said.

"We should not make any wild claims till the DGCA and other agencies of the government complete the probe," he said.

"There were complaints (made by) whistleblowers from (Boeing). I think those need to be investigated," Raha said.

Earlier, addressing the ICC event, he advocated manufacturing aircraft engines indigenously. —*PTI*

Wreckage of the crashed Air India plane being lifted through a crane, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Plane's comprehensive check was due in Dec: Officials

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Air India's ill-fated Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner underwent comprehensive maintenance checks in June 2023 and was due for the next scheduled comprehensive checks in December this year, according to airline officials.

Officials said on Saturday that the aircraft VT-ANB underwent C checks or comprehensive checks in June 2023 and the next such scheduled checks were to happen in December this year.

- The aircraft was powered by GEnx engines, manufactured by GE Aerospace. Officials said there were no issues with the engines

The C checks were done by AIESL (AI Engineering Services Ltd).

The right side engine of the nearly 12-year-old aircraft was overhauled and installed in March 2025, while an inspection of the left side engine was done as per the engine manufacturer's protocol in April 2025, the officials said.

The aircraft was powered by GEnx engines, manufactured by GE Aerospace. The officials also claimed that there were no issues with the engines or the aircraft.

There was no official statement from Air India. —*PTI*

DAMAGED COLLEGE HOSTELS VACATED FOR PROBE: DEAN

Hostels of the BJ Medical College that were damaged in the Air India plane crash here are being vacated as the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AIIB) wants to conduct a probe, the institution's dean, Minakshi Parikh, said on Saturday. Talking to reporters, Parikh said four buildings — Atulyam 1, 2, 3 and 4 — which were damaged in the crash are being vacated, and occupants will be given alternative accommodations. The Boeing 787 Dreamliner flight crashed into a medical hostel and its canteen complex.

Resident doctors and medical students carry their belongings from the damaged government hostel **PHOTO: PTI**

SURVIVORS OF PREVIOUS TRAGEDIES RECOUNT THEIR HORROR

Indian Airlines: Aurangabad-Mumbai, 1993

Congress MLA Ramprasad Bordikar and I were going to Mumbai for Sharad Pawar's programme.... The aircraft did not gain the speed required for the take-off, and its rear landing gear dashed against a truck outside the airport. The pilot somehow managed to land at a farm in the Varud Shivar area... Bordikar and I had been offered seats in the rear, but we preferred to sit near the cockpit. We could escape, but those in the rear section were charred to death in the fire

Vasant Shinde, survivor

112 passengers on board, 55 died

Air India Express: Dubai- Kozhikode, 2020

The majority of the passengers onboard that flight, including me, were already thoroughly disturbed because of the Covid situation. Many of the passengers were on their way back home after losing their jobs because of the pandemic. Suddenly, a jerking sound was heard. Some children were seen falling from the laps of their mothers. I hugged my brother tightly. Luckily, our flight didn't catch fire as the area was receiving heavy rains.

Ashique, survivor

190 passengers on board, 21 died, including both pilots

Thai crash survivor also occupied seat 11A

Ruangsak Loychusak and Vishwash Ramesh both survived plane crashes sitting in the same seat **PHOTO: X**

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

In an extraordinary twist of fate, a Thailand actor had aksi survived a plane crash occupying the same seat number as the Ahmedabad crash survivour: 11A. His accident took place nearly three decades ago, in 1998 in Thailand.

James Ruangsak Loychusak, a 47-year-old actor and singer from Thailand, was astounded to learn that the only survivor of the recent Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad, a 40-year-old British Indian man named Viswash Kumar Ramesh, had also occupied seat 11A—the same seat he had occupied during his near-fatal ordeal on Thai Airways flight TG261.

Loychusak was aboard the Thai Airways flight in 1998 when it crashed while attempting to land at Surat Thani, resulting in the loss of 101 lives out of 146 passengers. Although he survived, there were other survivors on that flight.

After defying death, the actor has, on several occasions, openly addressed the trauma and survivor's guilt he carried for years. According to reports, he did not fly again for a decade.

Loychusak expressed his amazement on Facebook, saying: "Survivor of a plane crash in India. He sat in the same seat as me. 11A." —*Agencies*

A NEW UNEASINESS

Sounds of planes make crash-affected residents jittery

AHMEDABAD, 14 JUNE

For children of Meghaninagar in Ahmedabad, spotting an aircraft swooshing by above their homes used to be a fun activity, but the deadly crash in their locality has robbed them of the simple joy. Things will never be the same again for the people of the Meghaninagar and Asarwa areas, located close to the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.

"We used to wave at planes. It was our favourite activity until that crash happened. Now, every time a plane passes by, it gives us jitters. The sound of engines now makes us uneasy. We no longer sit on terraces to wave back at the planes. Our parents, out of concern, have stopped us from going to the terrace," Yash Parmar, a resident said.

Hitesh Shah, a resident of Asarwa, who witnessed the large ball of fire following the crash, said people's perspective towards planes have changed.

"People of this area were used to large planes flying above their homes every hour. But now, people pray every time they hear the sound of an aircraft engine. We now view planes with suspicion, hoping that it does not crash on us," Shah said.

Heeraben Prajapati, a resident of Meghaninagar, said many women thought that enemy planes had bombed the airport, and people even ran for cover after seeing the huge cloud of fire and smoke.

"Low-flying planes and vibration inside our homes were part of our lives, and we never bothered. But now, we come out of our homes every time a plane passes in the afternoon and hope that it does not crash. Many can't sleep properly out of fear," she said. —*PTI*

A candlelight prayer service organised by the Archdiocese of Delhi, at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, in New Delhi on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

UK ARRANGES 'RECEPTION CENTRE' FOR KIN OF BRITISH NATIONALS

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The UK has set up a "reception centre" in a hotel near Ahmedabad airport to provide support and advice for the families and friends of British nationals following the Air India plane crash on 12 June, its High Commission here said on Saturday.

The London-bound flight AI171, carrying 242 passengers and crew, crashed into a medical college complex in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

Air India has confirmed that 241 people, including 52 British nationals who were on board the flight, were killed in the crash.

One person, a British citizen, has survived and is currently undergoing treatment for injuries sustained during the accident.

"The UK Reception Centre, near Ahmedabad airport, will be open from 0900 to 2100 every day, starting today," it said.

British High Commissioner to India, Lindy Cameron, said that she met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad on Friday and shared condolences on behalf of her country. —*PTI*

IMA WRITES TO TATA SONS SEEKING AID FOR KIN OF MEDICAL COLLEGE VICTIMS

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

The Indian Medical Association on Saturday said it has written to Tata Sons urging the company to extend financial support to the injured and deceased students of BJ Medical College.

"We humbly request you to consider extending similar compensation and assistance to the families of the deceased and the injured students and doctors of BJ Medical College. Such a gesture would go a long way in showing solidarity with the medical fraternity, especially at a time when they need compassion and reassurance," the letter added. The Tata Group on Thursday announced that it will provide Rs 1 crore compensation to the families of each person who lost their lives including passengers, crew members and individuals on the premises.

IMA lauded Tata Group's announcement of Rs 1 crore compensation to the families of the passengers. —*PTI*

14-year-old UP boy booked for raping minor

HATHRAS, 14 JUNE

A 14-year-old boy has been booked for allegedly raping an eight-year-old girl in a local village under the jurisdiction of the Mursan police station in Hathras of Uttar Pradesh. According to Circle Officer Himanshu Mathur, the incident occurred on Friday evening when the girl was near her family farm, sitting beside a tubewell. The boy, hailing from a nearby village, reportedly lured her to a field before assaulting her. Family members discovered the girl in the field and promptly informed the authorities. A search for the accused, who has since fled, is underway. Police have initiated a case against the boy following a medical examination of the victim. The incident highlights ongoing concerns regarding the safety of minors in the region. *—PTI*

J'khand woman's death not accident, but murder: Police

MEDININAGAR, 14 JUNE

Authorities in Jharkhand have classified the death of a 24-year-old woman as murder rather than an accident, implicating her husband, Mahadev Singh. Juhi Devi was found dead near the Tori-Chetar station after allegedly falling from a running train. Initially, Singh claimed her death was accidental but later confessed during police interrogation that he had forcibly pushed her from the train. According to police, a domestic dispute prompted the tragic act. Singh has since been arrested and is in judicial custody following a court ruling. The case has drawn attention to domestic violence issues and the lethal consequences of familial disputes, prompting discussions on the need for greater awareness and preventive measures in such situations. *—PTI*

Urs at Ayodhya cancelled over security concerns

AYODHYA, 14 JUNE

The Ayodhya administration has declared a ban on the annual Urs ceremony due to concerns over potential law and order disturbances. Scheduled to take place over the weekend, the event has been held for the past two decades at the Dada Miya Mazaar in the Khanpur Masodha area. The cancellation came after complaints from the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), which alleged that a gathering was being organised under the guise of "Ghazi Baba." Investigating officials discovered that the organisers had received permission to hold the Urs but were reportedly raising funds under a different name. The local circle officer said that the initial permissions were revoked after the discrepancies were uncovered. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

YS Jagan accuses AP CM of inciting Podili violence

AMARAVATI, 14 JUNE

YSR Congress Party leader YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of inciting violence during his recent visit to Podili, where he aimed to support distressed tobacco farmers. Reddy alleged that Naidu sent approximately 40 TDP workers to disrupt his meeting with the farmers, resulting in stone pelting. The gathering drew over 40,000 attendees, who, according to Reddy, exhibited remarkable restraint despite the provocations. He questioned the Chief Minister's accountability had the crowd retaliated and condemned Naidu for ignoring the farmers' plight while diverting attention to his political agenda. Reddy's comments highlight the tensions between the two political factions amid ongoing issues facing the agricultural community. The TDP has yet to respond to these allegations. *—PTI*

India distances itself from SCO condemnation of Israel

India projects neutral stand; Israel says sorry over map blunder

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE:

India on Saturday reiterated its neutral stance on the escalating Israel-Iran conflict, urging all parties to pursue de-escalation through diplomacy. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified that India did not participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) discussions leading to a statement condemning Israel's recent strikes on Iran.

India had earlier expressed "deep concern" over the situation and called on both countries to avoid any further escalation. The SCO, currently chaired by China, had condemned the Israeli strikes as a violation of international law and Iranian sovereignty, claiming they posed serious threats to regional and global stability.

"The SCO has issued a statement on recent developments between Israel and Iran. India's own position was articulated on 13 June and remains unchanged," the MEA said. "We urge that channels of dialogue and diplomacy be utilised for de-escalation."

Israeli security forces inspect destroyed residential buildings that were hit by a missile fired from Iran, in Ramat Gan, near Tel Aviv, Israel **PHOTO: PTI**

India also communicated its position to other SCO members and opted out of discussions on the joint statement.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar discussed the issue with his Iranian counterpart on Friday, conveying the international community's concern and urging a swift return to diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Israel's Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken to Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Azar expressed hope that India could mediate, noting that "India has avenues for dialogue with both sides."

Azar described Israel's actions as defensive, citing an "existential threat" from Iran's nuclear programme and alleged missile buildup. He claimed Iran planned to develop 10,000 ballistic missiles in three years, and 20,000 in six years. Israel's military apologised for sharing a map that incorrectly depicted Jammu and Kashmir as part of Pakistan. *– PTI*

Axiom-4 mission to lift-off on 19 June

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

PHOTO: ANI

The much-delayed Axiom-4 commercial mission to the International Space Station (ISS), carrying Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and three others, is targeting a launch on 19 June, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The mission was to blast-off from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on 11 June, but was delayed first due to a fuel leak in SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket and then another leak in the Russian section of the ISS. ISRO confirmed that the liquid oxygen leak in the launch vehicle has been successfully resolved.

Axiom Space was closely working with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to assess the pressure anomaly in the Zvezda Service Module on board the ISS.

"Axiom Space is now targeting June 19, 2025, for the launch of the Ax-04 mission," ISRO said.

The astronauts were originally scheduled for lift-off on 29 May, which was put off to 8 June, 9 and 11.

Through this mission, Axiom Space aims to expand commercial access to low-earth orbit and build the world's first commercial space station.

Former NASA astronaut and director of human spaceflight at Axiom Space, Peggy Whitson, will command the commercial mission, while Shukla will serve as its pilot.

European Space Agency project astronaut Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland and Tibor Kapu of Hungary are the mission specialists.

The 14-day mission will "realise the return" to human spaceflight for India, Poland and Hungary. *– PTI*

R'than student tops NEET, MP comes 2nd

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Rajasthan's Mahesh Kumar has topped the medical entrance exam NEET-UG, while Madhya Pradhesh's Utkarsh Awadhiya has bagged the second rank, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Saturday.

Over 12.36 lakh candidates out of 22.09 lakh test takers qualified the exam. In 2024 13.15 lakh candidates qualified the exam. However, the number of test takers was also higher last year at over 23.33 lakh.

Maharashtra's Krishang Joshi and Delhi's Mrinal Kishore Jha bagged the third and fourth ranks respectively.

Delhi's Avika Aggarwal bagged the fifth rank.

The maximum qualifying candidates are from Uttar Pradesh with over 1.70 lakh, followed by Maharashtra with over 1.25 lakh and Rajasthan with over 1.19 lakh.

The NTA conducts the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) exam every year for admission into medical colleges. A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for the MBSS course- 56,000 in government hospitals and 52,000 in private colleges.

Admissions to undergraduate courses in dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha utilise NEET results. *—PTI*

Red alert issued as heavy rains batter Kerala

THIRUVAN ANTHAPURAM, 14 JUNE

Several districts in Kerala experienced widespread rainfall and strong winds on Saturday, leading to property damage. In many high-range areas of the northern districts, trees were uprooted following continuous overnight rain.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a red alert for five northern districts—Kasaragod, Kannur, Wayanad, Kozhikode, and Malappuram—forecasting extremely heavy rainfall. A red alert signifies rainfall exceeding 20 cm in 24 hours and typically prompts emergency preparedness.

An orange alert was announced for Palakkad, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Idukki, Kottayam, and Pathanamthitta, indicating very heavy rain between 11 cm and 20 cm. Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, and Alappuzha were placed under yellow alert, which denotes rainfall ranging from 6 cm to 11 cm.

Orange alert in Palakkad, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Idukki **PHOTO: ANI**

Authorities have urged residents against venturing out. Fishing activities were to be stopped. *—PTI*

India to rehaul transport system to help PwDs

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

India's Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has released a draft framework proposing sweeping changes to make public transport fully accessible for persons with disabilities (PwDs). The draft 'Transport Accessibility Framework', prepared by the Strategic Accessibility Cell – Rights of Riders (SAC-RR), outlines binding standards across the entire transport ecosystem, from booking to boarding and emergency response.

Key proposals include mandatory wheelchair spaces in all new buses and Metro coaches, step-free access to toilets at stations, boarding ramps, widened coach doors, and trained staff across air, rail, and road networks. Retrofitting of existing buses and intercity coaches with lifts or bridge ramps is also mandated.

Airports must ensure barrier-free access from parking to boarding, provide aisle chairs, and include assistive tech in entertainment systems. E-rickshaws and taxi aggregators are required to include wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Ropeways and ferries are also covered.

The guidelines demand accessible digital platforms, quiet sensory rooms, tactile strips, and visible signage. Stakeholder consultations are underway, with the final version due post-review. *—PTI*

Singapore vessel: Firefighting continues, 8 ICG ships deployed

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Indian Coast continued its relentless fire fighting on Saturday with eight ICG ships currently on deployment, five days after a fire onboard a Singapore-flagged cargo vessel that occurred following a container explosion off the Kerala coast.

An offshore patrol vessel of the ICG is carrying out mid-sea refuelling of a salvage tug to sustain towing operation.

The ICG achieved a "major milestone" in the ongoing operation.

"Eight ICG ships are participating in the firefighting operations," Coast Guard spokesperson, Comdt Amit Uniyal said.

The Indian Navy on Saturday shared some details of what it described as a "daring aerial insertion" of a salvage team onboard the vessel a day ago.18 of the 22 crew members were rescued. *—PTI*

38 arrested in Assam amid communal tensions

GUWAHATI, 14 JUNE

38 individuals were arrested in Assam's Dhubri following a surge in communal tensions. The arrests come after a shoot-at-sight order was issued during the unrest that erupted over the discovery of a cow's head placed outside a Hanuman temple during Eid celebrations.

The troubling incident occurred on 7 June. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited the affected areas. Prohibitory orders were issued in Dhubri on 9 June, though suspended later. *—PTI*

Trump 'trumpeted' Indo-Pak ceasefire claims 13 times: Cong

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Congress party on Saturday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his silence over US President Donald Trump's repeated claims of stopping a war between India and Pakistan.

Congress's communication chief, Jairam Ramesh said that Trump made this claim 13 times in three countries, often stating he used US trade policy as leverage. "@narendramodi when will you speak up?" Ramesh posted on X.

India and Pakistan engaged in cross-border hostilities following the Pahalgam terror attack. The countries agreed to a ceasefire on 10 May.

India maintained the ceasefire was a result of direct military dialogue, not US intervention.

Ramesh also accused the Modi government of diplomatic failure, pointing to the US praising Pakistan as a key counterterrorism partner and a perceived policy shift in Washington.

The Congress also attacked the central government for abstaining from a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) vote on a resolution for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The party accused the Modi government of abandoning India's long-standing foreign policy principles.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge questioned whether India had given up its principled positions against war and genocide. *—PTI*

Breach of privilege proceedings against Kamra to begin soon

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Breach of privilege proceedings against stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra over a parody song aimed at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde are set to commence shortly, according to a senior official.

The notice, submitted by BJP legislator Pravin Darekar, also implicates Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sushma Andhare. It was presented in the state legislative council during the budget session held in March. Legislative council secretary Jitendra Bhole confirmed that chairperson Ram Shinde has forwarded the notice to the privilege committee, which is chaired by BJP Member of the Legislative Council Prasad Lad.

Lad indicated to PTI that the committee convened to discuss the breach of privilege notice and has initiated the process to issue notices to both Kamra and Andhare. The comedian, known for his candid stand-up performances targeting politicians and public figures, faced backlash from supporters of Shinde following the release of the song earlier this year. *—PTI*

AMID LANGUAGE ROW

Hindi replaces Urdu-Persian in Chattisgarh's police system

PHOTO: CHATGPT AI

RAIPUR, 14 JUNE

The Chhattisgarh government has replaced Urdu and Persian words used in police official records with Hindi terms that can be easily understood by a layperson, in order to make policing more accessible, transparent and communicative.

Replacing 'halafnama' with 'shapath patra' (affidavit), 'dafa' with 'dhara' (section), 'fariyadi' with 'shikayatkarta' (complainant) and 'chasmdid' with 'pratyakshdarshi' (eyewitness) are some of the examples of this.

On the instructions of Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma the director general of police (DGP) issued a letter to the district superintendents of police (SPs) stating that difficult and traditional words used in police functioning should be replaced with simple and clear Hindi terms.

A list of 109 words with their Hindi alternatives was provided with the letter.

When a common citizen visits a police station for any complaint, crime information or other work, he/she is often confused about the language used in the FIR or other documents. Words of other languages are unknown them, making it difficult to explain their point properly and understand the entire process properly, Deputy CM Sharma said.

- On the instructions of Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, the DGP issued a letter to all SPs stating that difficult and traditional words used in police functioning should be replaced with simple and clear-Hindi terms. A list of 109 words with alternatives was provided with the letter

Language used in policing should be understood by the citizens, thereby boosting their confidence.

All the subordinate officers should be aware of the change and the order should be implemented in every police post, police station and office of the state.

This simplification of language will help the complainant to clearly state, hear and understand their case.

Some of the words to be replaced with simple Hindi terms are 'khayanat' to be replaced with 'hadapna' (to usurp), 'goshwara' with 'naksha' (map), 'nakabjani' with 'sendh' (burglary), 'maal mashruka' with 'looti-chori ki gai sampatti' (looted assets), 'rojnamcha' with 'samanya dainiki', etc. *—PTI*

ELDERS ABSUE AWARENESS DAY

A skit being performed as part of an awareness campaign organised by Bengaluru City Police and Nightingales Medical Trust near Shivajinagar Bus Stand marking World Elders Abuse Awareness Day 2025, in Bengaluru on Saturday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

How does it feel to be a lone survivor of an air crash?

Viswashkumar Ramesh, the lone survivor of the Air India aircrash on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Viswashkumar Ramesh, a British citizen returning from a trip to India, has been confirmed as the only survivor of Thursday's deadly Air India crash.

"I don't know how I am alive," Ramesh told family, according to his brother Nayan, in a video call moments after emerging from the wreckage. Another brother Ajay, seated elswhere on the plane, was killed.

The Boeing 787-7 Dreamliner crashed into a medical college less than a minute after taking off in the city of Ahmedabad, killing the other 229 passengers and 12 crew. At least five people were killed on the ground.

Surviving a mass disaster of this kind may be hailed as a kind of "miracle". But what is it like to survive – especially as the only one?

Past research has shown disaster survivors may experience an intense range of emotions, from grief, anxiety to feelings of loss and uncertainty.These are common reactions to an extraordinary situation.

Some people may develop post-traumatic stress disorder and have difficulty adjusting to a new reality after bearing witness to immense loss. They may also be dealing with physical recovery from injuries sustained in the disaster.

Most people recover after disasters by drawing on their own strengths and the support of others. Recovery rates are high.

However, being a sole survivor of a mass casualty may have its own complex psychological challenges.

Survivors can experience guilt they lived when others died. My friend, Gill Hicks, spoke to me for this article about the ongoing guilt she still feels, years after surviving the 2005 bombings of the London underground.

Lying trapped in a smoke-filled train carriage, she was the last living person to be rescued after the attack. Gill lost both her legs.

In the case of a sole survivor, this guilt may be particularly acute. However, research addressing the impact of sole survivorship is limited. Most research that looks at the psychological impact of disaster focuses on the impact of disasters more broadly.

Those interviewed for a 2013 documentary about surviving large plane crashes, Sole Survivor, express complex feelings – wanting to share their stories, but fearing being judged by others. Being the lone survivor can be a heavy burden.

People who survive a disaster may also be under pressure to explain what happened and relive the trauma for the benefit of others.

Vishwashkumar Ramesh was filmed and interviewed by media in the minutes and hours following the Air India crash. But as he told his brother: "I have no idea how I exited the plane".

It can be common for survivors themselves to be plagued by unanswerable questions. Did they live for a reason? Why did they live, when so many others died?

These kinds of unaswerable questions reflect our natural inclination to look for meaning in experiences, and to have our life stories make sense.

Studies indicate guilt is notably widespread among individuals who have experienced traumatic events, and it is associated with heightened psychopathological symptoms such as severe anxiety, insomnia or flashbacks and thoughts of suicide.

Taking time to process the traumatic event can help survivors cope, and seeking support from friends, family and community or faith leaders can help an individual work through difficult feelings.

Trauma reminders such as anniversaries are different to unexpected trauma triggers, but can still cause distress.

Media attention around collectively experienced dates can also amplify trauma-related distress, contributing to a cycle of media consumption and increased worry about future events.

On the 7 July, each year, Gill holds a private remembrance ritual. This allows her to express her grief and sense of loss, and to honour those who did not survive. These types of rituals can be a valuable tool in processing feelings of grief and guilt, offering a sense of control and meaning and facilitating the expression and acceptance of loss.

But lingering guilt and anxiety – especially when it interferes with day-to-day life – should not be ignored.

Survivors may need support from psychologists or mental health professionals in short & long term. *—The Conversation*

SALAR ساڈا

10-fold rise in rocket launches thins ozone layer

The international space industry is on a growth trajectory, but new research shows a rapid increase in rocket launches would damage the ozone layer.

Several hundred rockets are launched globally each year by a mix of commercial companies and nation-state space programmes. These take place at around 20 sites, almost all in the northern hemisphere, with the most prolific launch rates currently from the United States, China, New Zealand and Russia.

Our latest research explores the tipping point when launching more rockets will begin to cause problems. Our findings show that once rates reach 2,000 launches a year – about a ten-fold increase on last year – the current healing of the ozone layer slows down.

We argue that with care, we can avoid this future. The economic benefits of industry growth can be realised, but it will take a collaborative effort.

Rocket launches thin the ozone layer

The ozone layer protects life on Earth from harmful solar ultraviolet (UV) rays. It is slowly healing from the effects of chlorofluorocarbons and other damaging chemicals emitted last century, thanks to global cooperative agreements under the Montreal Protocol.

Gases and particulates emitted by rockets as they punch through the atmosphere are known to thin the ozone layer. So far, they don't cause appreciable ozone depletion, as relatively few launches take place each year.

However, launches are steadily increasing. In 2019, there were 102 launches. By 2024, that increased to 258 worldwide. There are expected to be even more in 2025. At multiple sites worldwide, the launch industry projects impressive levels of future growth.

For US-based launches, a three-fold increase in the number of rockets launched in 2023 is expected as soon as 2028.

One driver of this growth is the effort to build out satellite constellations to tens of thousands of units, positioned low in Earth's orbit. These require many launches to create and are happening in several nations, run by a number of companies.

Once in place, these constellations require ongoing launches to keep them supplied with active satellites.

Potential delay in ozone recovery

To figure out how future launches could affect the ozone layer, we first built a database of ozone-depleting chemicals emitted by rockets currently in use.

We then fed this database into a model of Earth's atmosphere and climate, and simulated atmospheric composition under several scenarios of higher rates of rocket launches.

We found that with around 2,000 launches worldwide each year, the ozone layer thins by up to 3 per cent. Due to atmospheric transport of rocket-emitted chemicals, we saw the largest ozone losses over Antarctica, even though most launches are taking place in the northern hemisphere.

Fortunately, the ozone losses are small. We wouldn't expect to see catastrophic damage to humans or ecosystems. However, the losses are significant given global efforts underway to heal the ozone layer.

The global abundance of ozone is still around 2 per cent lower than before the onset of losses caused by chlorofluorocarbons.

Future ozone losses are not locked in

Encouragingly, we found no significant ozone loss in a scenario of more modest rates of around 900 launches per year. However, this is for the types of rockets that are in use right now around the world.

We focus on current launch vehicles because it is uncertain when the new and massive rockets currently in development will enter use. But these larger rockets often require far more fuel, which creates more emissions at each launch.

Rocket propellant choices make a big difference to the atmosphere. We found fuels emitting chlorine-containing chemicals or black carbon particulates have the largest effects on the ozone layer.

Reducing use of these fuels as launch rates increase is key to supporting an ongoing recovery of the ozone layer.

Re-entering spacecraft and satellite debris can also cause damage. However, the global scientific community doesn't yet fully understand the chemistry around re-entry. Our work provides a realistic "floor" for the lowest level of damage that will occur.

But it is important to remember that these effects are not locked in. It is entirely possible to create a launch industry where we avoid harmful effects, but that would require reducing use of chlorine-containing fuels, minimising black carbon emissions by new rockets and monitoring emissions.

It will take keen effort and enthusiasm from industry and regulators, working together with scientists.

But this needs to start now, not after the damage is done. *—PTI*

The ozone layer protects life on Earth from harmful solar ultraviolet (UV) rays
PHOTO: X

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Iran's nuclear programme suffers a serious damage

- Israel's sweeping attack across Iran struck at the heart of Tehran's nuclear programme, delivering a blow to the country's ability to enrich uranium and potentially setting its nuclear ambitions back by months or years.
- As well as killing key military figures and nuclear scientists, the Israeli strikes destroyed part of a plant that was enriching uranium to levels far beyond the requirements for nuclear-fuelled power stations. The attacks also destroyed backup power for the underground section of the plant, potentially damaging more sensitive equipment.
- Iran's nuclear programme has progressed rapidly since 2018, when the US withdrew from a deal to limit Tehran's capacity to enrich uranium, which is necessary to build a nuclear weapon. Iran maintains that its programme is peaceful, but the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly warned that the country has enough enriched uranium to make several nuclear bombs if it chose to do so.
- Nuclear regulators said the assault was unlikely to lead to increased levels of radiation, even at the site where part of the fuel-enrichment plant was destroyed.
- Here's a closer look at the attack and its likely effects on Iran's nuclear efforts.
- Israel killed top military figures and nuclear scientists and destroyed part of a key enrichment site. There is "no question" it did substantial damage, said Fabian Hinz, an expert on Iran's nuclear programme at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London.
- David Albright, a nuclear weapons expert, speculated that the initial wave of attacks could set back any Iranian attempt to develop a nuclear weapon by about a year.
- A key question, Hinz said, is whether Israel also targeted suppliers of specialist components such as centrifuges and subcontractors.
- Israel's strategy appears to be to "destroy the brains" behind the programme and "as much equipment as possible," said Albright, who agreed that Israel has potentially done a "tremendous amount of damage" to the programme.
- Israel is widely believed to be behind a series of attacks in recent years that targeted Iranian nuclear scientists and sabotaged nuclear facilities.
- Hinz suggested a key Israeli goal was to undermine Iran's ability to make centrifuges, which are critical for enriching uranium. Uranium enrichment is a key component of building a nuclear weapon, but weapons also require detonators and a means of delivery, like missiles.
- Iran has two uranium-enrichment sites, and the country said Wednesday that it has built and will activate a third enrichment facility.
- On Thursday, Israel struck Iran's main and oldest facility in Natanz, 220 kilometers southeast of Tehran, which was protected by anti-aircraft batteries, fencing and Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.
- The IAEA's chief, Rafael Grossi, told an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council on Friday that the above-ground part of the plant where uranium was enriched up to 60% was destroyed, along with electrical infrastructure, including a substation, the main electric power supply building, the emergency power supply and backup generators.
- Grossi said there were no changes to radiation levels following the attack or any indication of damage to the underground section of the plant. That part of the facility is buried to protect it from airstrikes and contains the bulk of Natanz's enrichment facilities, with 10,000 centrifuges that enrich uranium up to 5 per cent, Albright said.
- Most of Iran's centrifuges are in Natanz, the experts said, because a lot of them are required to enrich uranium to 5 per cent — which is the maximum level normally used for nuclear-fueled power stations.
- But, buried under a huge mountain at Fordo, around 100 kms southwest of Tehran, is another nuclear facility where Iran is also enriching uranium to 60 per cent, which is only a short step away from weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent. According to the IAEA, Tehran has the largest number of its most powerful centrifuges at Fordo.
- An Iranian news outlet close to the government reported Friday that two explosions were heard near the Fordo site
- The potential for more strikes loomed large. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the attacks will continue "for as many days at it takes to remove this threat."
- Although Grossi said part of the enrichment facility at Natanz was destroyed, he noted that radiation levels had not spiked.
- Even if radiation did leak, experts said, the amount would be unlikely to pose a risk to people in the region or even those near the facilities that got hit.
- Uranium itself is not especially toxic, he said, and is common in parts of the environment.
- In order to become sick, someone would have to ingest large quantities of uranium, Albright said, pointing out that the element can be found naturally in seawater and the earth's crust.
- Rather than radiation, the greater risk might be from fluorine, which is used to enrich uranium and could have been deadly to those nearby if released during an attack.
- Fluorine is mixed with the uranium during enrichment to turn it into a gas called uranium hexafluoride. It is extremely volatile, will quickly corrode and can burn the skin. It is especially deadly if inhaled.

—PTI

Israeli security forces inspect destroyed houses that were struck by a missile fired from Iran, in Rishon Lezion, Israel, on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

PHOTO: X

UN conference on Palestine deferred due to conflict

PARIS, 14 JUNE

A high-level UN conference aimed at discussing a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians has been postponed due to escalating tensions in the Middle East, announced French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday. Co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, the conference was set to take place in New York from 17-20 June. Macron expressed a commitment to recognise a Palestinian state in the future, despite the delay. The decision to postpone was attributed to logistical issues and the inability of some Palestinian representatives to attend. Macron reiterated the conference's goal of establishing a demilitarised Palestinian state that acknowledges Israel's security, excluding Hamas leadership. *—PTI*

Australian man killed in Bali villa shooting

DENPASAR, 14 JUNE

An Australian man has been shot dead at a villa on the tourist island of Bali, with another Australian man left injured, police confirmed on Saturday. Local police chief Arief Batubara reported that an investigation is ongoing, and authorities are seeking potential witnesses. The victims were swiftly taken to a hospital in Denpasar, the provincial capital of Bali; however, Batubara stated that a motive for the shooting remains unclear. *—PTI*

Earthquakes jolt Myanmar, Bhutan, Pak, Kuril Islands

NAYPYTAW/THIMPHU, 14 JUNE

Earthquakes shook Myanmar, Bhutan, Kuril Islands and in Karachi on Saturday. In Myanmar, a magnitude 3.4 earthquake struck at a shallow depth of 80km, following two significant quakes earlier in the week—one measuring 4.3 and another at 4.1 magnitude respectively. The National Centre for Seismology (NCS) warned of potential aftershocks. Meanwhile, Bhutan experienced a magnitude 3.5 earthquake at a depth of just 10km, which poses a higher risk of damage due to its shallow nature. The NCS highlighted Bhutan's vulnerability given its position along the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. Additionally, the Kuril Islands were jolted by a magnitude 6.1 earthquake, also at a shallow depth of 10km. This region is known for its seismic activity, with historical records showing numerous significant earthquakes. Karachi also experienced a series of minor earthquakes of 3.2 magnitude, with residents panicking in multiple areas. *—ANI*

Heavy rains flood Congo's capital, killing at least 19

KINSHASA , 14 JUNE

Major flooding hit several neighbourhoods in Congo's capital Kinshasa, killing at least 19 people and causing severe damage, authorities said on Saturday. Heavy rains Friday through Saturday triggered floods and landslides in Kinshasa's western neighbourhood of Ngaliema, killing at least 17 people, the local mayor, Fulgence Bolokome, told the radio station Top Congo. Two avenues in the city were also cut off, he added. Two other people died when the deluge toppled a wall in the southern neighbourhood of Lemba, Mayor Jean-Serge Poba said. "It was around 3am when we heard a loud noise. When we went outside, the neighbors' wall had collapsed. The man and his wife both died, leaving behind five children who made it out unharmed," resident Clovis Kalenga said. *—PTI*

Iran warns US, UK, France against helping Israel

IDF says 'way to Tehran is paved'; US readies Navy, jets

Israel's Iron Dome air defense system fires to intercept projectiles over Tel Aviv, Saturday, *PHOTO: PTI*

TEL AVIV/WASHINGTON, 14 JUNE

Iran retaliated with a series of drones and missile strikes on Israel.

Iran warned US, UK and France against helping Israel, state media reported. Tehran said it would target their bases and ships in the regions if they attempted to block any of the drones that Iran was sending to Israel.

The UK however clarified that it was not involved in Israel's initial attacks on Iran, while the US reportedly helped defend Tel Aviv.

Iran fired some 200 ballistic missiles at Israel in several barrages, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF)said.

Around 25 per cent, less than 50, were not intercepted "according to protocol" allowing them to strike open areas without causing damage to any critical infrastructure, the IDF claimed. Three Israelis are said to have been killed and some 70 others wounded in the Iranian missile attacks.

The IDF said that all of its bases, including air bases, are operating as usual with no harm to their functionality.

Meanwhile, Israeli Air Force Chief, Tomer Bar, said that "the way to Tehran has been paved", stressing that the Israeli jets can now freely operate in the Iranian capital. "Air Force fighter jets will begin to carry out strikes on targets in Tehran".

American air defence systems and Navy assets in the Middle East had helped Israel shoot down some of the munitions on Friday, a US official said.

The US has both ground-based Patriot missile defence systems and Terminal High Altitude Air Defence systems in the region capable of intercepting ballistic missiles.

Naval assets also were involved in assisting Israel, another official said.

The US also is moving military resources, including ships, in the Middle East.

The Navy has directed the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, which is capable of defending against ballistic missiles, to begin sailing from the western Mediterranean Sea toward the eastern Mediterranean and has directed a second destroyer to begin moving forward so it can be available if requested by the White House, US officials said.

American fighter jets also are patrolling the sky in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Iran confirmed two more high-ranking generals were killed by the Israeli strikes. The deceased were Gen. Gholamreza Mehrabi, deputy of intelligence for the armed forces' general staff, and Gen. Mehdi Rabbani, deputy of operations. *—Agencies*

ISRAEL KILLS AT LEAST 27 IN GAZA

DEIR AL-BALAH, 14 JUNE

At least 16 Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip overnight and into Saturday, according to local health officials. Another 11 Palestinians were killed overnight near food distribution points run by an Israeli-and US-supported humanitarian group in the latest of almost daily shootings near the sites since they opened last month.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a private contractor that operates the sites, said they were closed Saturday. But witnesses said thousands had gathered near the sites anyway, desperate for food as Israel's blockade and military campaign have driven the territory to the brink of famine.

The al-Awda Hospital said it received eight bodies and at least 125 wounded people from a shooting near a GHF site in central Gaza.

Mohamed Abu Hussein, a resident of the built-up Bureij refugee camp nearby, said Israeli forces opened fire toward the crowd about a kilometre from the food distribution point. *—PTI*

Iran breaches Israel's famed Iron Dome

Iran's drone assault on Israel reportedly beat Tel Aviv's famed Iron Dome. An Iranian missile descending into the Kirya district of Tel Aviv, breached the defence system, videos on social media showed. The area is known as the nerve centre of the Israeli military, housing the IDF and the Defence Ministry. The missile breached the dome and hit Defence headquarters.

UN: Above-ground part of Iran's nuke facility hit

UN Nuclear Chief Rafael Grossi told a meeting of the UN Security Council that Israeli strikes destroyed the above-ground section of Iran's main nuclear facility at Natanz. He said all the electrical infrastructure and emergency power generators were destroyed and a section of the facility where uranium was enriched. The main centrifuge facility underground did not appear to have been hit.

Jordan's airspace will reopen to civilian planes

As Israel shut its airspace, Jordan said will reopen its airspace to civilian aircraft Saturday morning, signalling the Mideast kingdom believes there is no immediate danger of further attacks. Jordan's state-run Petra news agency said the skies would reopen at 7.30am local. Jordan's airspace had seen Iranian drones and missiles cross through it, with Israeli fighter jets likely engaging targets there.

If (Iran's Supreme Leader) Khamenei continues to fire missiles at the Israeli home front, Tehran will burn...The Iranian dictator is turning the citizens of Iran into hostages.

-Israel Katz, Israeli Defence Minister

(The US) acted in a way that makes dialogue meaningless. You cannot claim to negotiate and at the same time divide work by allowing the Zionist regime to target Iran's territory.

-Esmail Baghaei, Iran Foreign Ministry Spokesperson

US braces for 'No Kings' protests

PHILADELPHIA, 14 JUNE

Cities large and small were preparing for major demonstrations Saturday across the US against President Donald Trump, as officials urge calm, National Guard troops mobilise and Trump attends a military parade in Washington to mark the Army's 250th anniversary.

A flagship 'No Kings' march and rally are planned in Philadelphia, but no events are scheduled to take place in Washington, DC, where the military parade will take place on Trump's birthday.

The demonstrations are gaining additional fuel from protests flaring up around the country over federal immigration enforcement raids and Trump ordering National Guard troops and Marines to Los Angeles where protesters blocked a freeway and set cars on fire.

Organisers say that one march will go to the gates of Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida *PHOTO: PTI*

Police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and flashbang grenades while officials enforced curfews in Los Angeles and Democratic governors called Trump's Guard deployment "an alarming abuse of power".

Although Governors urged for peaceful protests, Democrats and Republicans had markedly different stances.

Republican Governors in Virginia, Texas, Nebraska and Missouri began mobilising National Guard troops to help law enforcement manage demonstrations.

Washington state Governor Bob Ferguson, a Democrat, called for peaceful protests over the weekend, to ensure Trump doesn't send military to the state. "Trump wants to be able to say that we cannot handle our own public safety in Washington state."

However, in Los Angeles, where heated confrontations took place, about 200 Marines moved into the city to guard a federal building.

Marines started to replace Guard members protecting the federal buildings, so the Guard soldiers can be assigned to protect law enforcement officers on raids, the commander in charge of 4,700 troops deployed said. *—PTI*

Why is it called 'No Kings'?

The 'No Kings' theme was orchestrated by the 50501 Movement, to support democracy and against what they call the authoritarian actions of the Trump administration. The name 50501 stands for 50 states, 50 protests, one movement. The No Kings Day of Defiance was organised to reject billionaire-first politics and the militarisation of the country's democracy, therefore directly countering the Army's 250th anniversary celebration.

Trump gives Medicaid data to Homeland

Trump's administration this week provided deportation officials with personal data -- including the immigration status -- on millions of Medicaid enrollees, a move that could make it easier to locate people as part of his sweeping immigration crackdown. Two top advisers to Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr ordered the dataset handed over to the Department of Homeland Security. Officials at were given just 54 minutes to comply with the directive.

IF ALL GOES WELL

Yunus hints of elections in early February

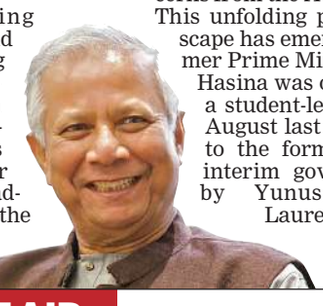
DHAKA, 14 JUNE

- Yunus indicated that the elections could potentially take place even before the start of Ramadan. Yunus is on a visit to London, although British Prime Minister Keir Starmer opted not to meet him

Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's interim government, has suggested that national elections may be held in early February next year. Following a meeting in London with Acting BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, Yunus indicated that if all necessary preparations are made, the elections could potentially take place even before the start of Ramadan in 2026.

A joint statement released after their discussions highlighted the importance of achieving substantial progress on reforms and justice before the elections can proceed. Rahman emphasised the need for the elections to be held ahead of Ramadan, a sentiment echoed by BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia.

The meeting between Yunus and Rahman is being regarded as a pivotal moment in Bangladeshi politics, especially as the BNP, under Khaleda Zia's leadership, stands as the largest political party following the ban on Sheikh Hasina's Awami League. Rahman, who has spent 16 years in exile in London, is reportedly preparing to return to Bangladesh soon.



Yunus is currently on a four-day official visit to London, during which British Prime Minister Keir Starmer opted not to meet him, citing concerns from the Awami League. This unfolding political landscape has emerged after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted during a student-led uprising in August last year, leading to the formation of the interim government led by Yunus, a Nobel Laureate. *—PTI*

Indian-origin heroes on King Charles III's birthday honours list

LONDON, 14 JUNE

As many as 30 individuals of Indian heritage have received recognition in King Charles III's Birthday Honours List 2025 for their outstanding contributions across various fields.

Leading the accolades are Prem Babu Goyal of the City of London Corporation, Tanuja Randery from Amazon Web Services, and Professor Jagtar Singh of the NHS, all awarded Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Notable inclusions are former England football captain David Beckham, who is honoured with a Knighthood, and Sunita Arora for charitable services receiving an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). Nurse Avinderjit Bhatia and Pooja Kanda, renowned for campaigning against knife crime, also receive OBEs.

Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) include classical musician Surdarshan Singh Chana and Dr Richa Sinha for her work within the Hindu community in Scotland. In total, more than a thousand recipients are honoured, with a particular emphasis on public service. *—PTI*

URGES US NOT TO REDIRECT AID

Surge in oil price could help Russia: Zelenskyy

KYIV, 14 JUNE

A sharp rise in global oil prices following Israeli strikes on Iran will benefit Russia and bolster its military capabilities in the war in Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday.

Speaking to journalists in Kyiv, Zelenskyy said the surge in oil prices threatens Ukraine's position on the battlefield, especially because Western allies have not enforced effective price caps on Russian oil exports.

"The strikes led to a sharp increase in the price of oil, which is negative for us," Zelenskyy said. "The Russians are getting stronger due to greater income from oil exports."

Global oil prices rose 7 per cent after Israel and Iran exchanged attacks, raising concerns that further escalation in the region could disrupt oil flow.

Zelenskyy said he planned to raise the issue in an upcoming conversation with US President Donald Trump. Zelenskyy also expressed concern that US military aid could be diverted away from Ukraine towards Israel.

"We would like aid to Ukraine not to decrease because of this," he said. "Last time, this was a factor."

Ukraine's military needs have been sidelined by the US in favour of supporting Israel, Zelenskyy said, citing a shipment of 20,000 interceptor missiles, designed to counter Iran-made Shahed drones, that had been intended for Ukraine but were redirected to Israel.

An air defence system, Barak-8, promised to Ukraine by Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu was sent to the US for repairs but never delivered to Ukraine, Zelenskyy said.

A rescue worker puts out a fire of a humanitarian aid storage destroyed by a Russian drone strike in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, on Saturday *PHOTO: X*

Meanwhile, the Russian Defence Ministry claimed Saturday that its troops captured another village in the Donetsk region, Zelenyi Kut. Ukraine did not comment.

Russia launched 58 drones and decoys at Ukraine overnight into Saturday, according to the Ukrainian Air Force. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Spicejet profit jumps to Rs 325 cr in March qtr

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Budget carrier Spicejet on Saturday said its standalone profit after tax surged nearly three-fold to Rs 324.87 crore in the March 2025 quarter. Gurugram-based airline had posted a PAT of Rs 119 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24, according to a regulatory filing. However, the revenue from operations for the reporting quarter declined 16 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,446.37 crore from Rs 1,719.3 crore in Q4 FY24, SpiceJet said in the filing. For the 2024-25 fiscal, SpiceJet posted a standalone PAT of Rs 580.74 crore against a loss of Rs 409 crore in the year-ago period. The revenue from operations fell 25 per cent to Rs 5,284 crore in FY25 against Rs 7050 crore a year ago, as per the exchange filing. *—PTI*

Biofuel sector moves from promise to action

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

According to a report by YES Securities, India's biofuel sector is transitioning from a phase of promise to partial implementation, thanks to robust government policies and increasing demands for decarbonisation. Supported by initiatives, the sector has made notable strides, particularly in ethanol blending, which has reached 18 per cent. However, challenges persist in the compressed biogas segment, including feedstock logistics and underutilisation of production capacity. Co-firing biomass in thermal power plants, particularly in regions affected by stubble burning, is another highlighted effort under the SAMARTH initiative.*—PTI*

Zepto's Dharavi facility reopens after FDA clearance

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Quick commerce platform Zepto has resumed operations at its Dharavi facility in Mumbai after Maharashtra Food & Drug Administration (FDA) revoked suspension of its parent firm Kiranakart Technologies' food business licence. The licence was suspended two weeks ago after an inspection revealed fungal growth on food items, poor hygiene, improper cold storage, and expired goods not separated from fresh stock. FDA noted that corrective measures had been taken. Zepto stated the appellate authority reviewed audit reports and evidence before lifting suspension. *—Agencies*

Foreign investors infuse Rs 3,346.94 cr in mkts

RBI's rate cut received positive feedback from investors

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- The rate cut by the RBI supported investor confidence and led to strong FPI inflows for the first three trading sessions of the week from 9 June to 13 June.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pumped Rs 3,346.94 crore into Indian stock markets this week, boosted by positive sentiment after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a rate cut, according to data from the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

The rate cut by the RBI supported investor confidence and led to strong FPI inflows for the first three trading sessions of the week from 9 June to 13 June. However, geopolitical tensions between Israel and Iran weighed on investor mood toward the end of the week.

On the last trading day of the week, Friday, FPIs pulled out a significant Rs 3,275.76 crore from Indian equities. This large outflow reduced the net investment figure for the week to Rs 3,346.94 crore.

In times of geopolitical tension, such as the ongoing Israel-Iran conflict, investors tend to shift their money to safer assets like gold, which can reduce flows into emerging markets like India.

Despite the positive inflows during the week, the overall FPI investment trend for June remains negative. So far in June, FPIs have withdrawn Rs 5,402 crore from Indian equity markets, as per NSDL data.

Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on 6 June, announced a surprise rate cut of 50 basis points. The repo rate was reduced to 5.5 per cent, which gave a strong push to investor confidence.

Earlier in May, the net foreign portfolio investment inflows remained in positive and stood at Rs 19,860 crore, making May the best-performing month so far this year in terms of foreign investment.

In previous months' data also showed that FPIs had sold stocks worth Rs 3,973 crore in March. In January and February, they had sold equities worth Rs 78,027 crore and Rs 34,574 crore, respectively. *– ANI*

LIQUIDITY SUPPORT

RBI likely to ease rates after a brief pause: Report

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to resume cutting interest rates after a brief pause, as the Indian economy may require further liquidity support in the second half of the 2025–26 financial year (H2 FY26), according to Ionic Wealth, a report by Angel One.

The central bank recently lowered its inflation target for FY26 to 3.7 per cent. For the first quarter, inflation is projected at 2.9 per cent, and the average inflation for April and May is currently tracking close to that estimate.

India's Consumer Price Index inflation slowed sharply to 2.82 per cent year-on-year in May 2025, down from 3.16 per cent in April. On a month-on-month basis, inflation dropped by 35 basis points. Core inflation also fell slightly to 4.28per cent from 4.36 per cent.

The report noted that the latest inflation print provides greater policy flexibility for the RBI to focus on economic growth, which remains a key concern.

It also warned, however, that while domestic inflation drivers appear under control, global factors such as geopolitical tensions and trade dynamics continue to pose risks to inflation stability. "Some uncertainty lingers from imported inflation," it added. *– ANI*

Meta's $14.8B AI deal faces scrutiny

BENGALURU, 14 JUNE

Meta Platforms has invested USD 14.8 billion in Scale AI and hired its 28-year-old CEO Alexandr Wang, raising questions about whether the move skirts US antitrust scrutiny.

The deal, Meta's second-largest to date, gives it a 49 per cent non-voting stake in Scale, a data-labelling firm whose clients include competitors Microsoft and OpenAI.

While the transaction does not amount to a full acquisition and avoids automatic regulatory review, it could still be investigated if authorities suspect it was structured to bypass oversight or damage competition. Reuters reported that Google has already ended its relationship with Scale due to Meta's involvement, with other clients potentially following suit.

Scale said its operations remain strong and it is committed to safeguarding client data, though it declined to comment on Google.

Legal experts suggest Meta's minority, non-voting stake offers it some protection. However, critics remain sceptical.

Under President Trump, regulators have taken a less aggressive stance on AI partnerships, though scepticism of Big Tech persists. *– Agencies*

NPAs likely to rise in FY26: CareEdge

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

- The report forecasts that the Gross NPA (GNPA) ratio for Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) could edge up from 2.3 per cent at the end of FY25 to around 2.3–2.4 per cent by March 2026.

Non-performing assets (NPAs) in India's banking system are expected to rise marginally in the first half of FY26, primarily due to growing stress in the retail segment—especially unsecured personal and microfinance loans—according to CareEdge Ratings.

The report forecasts that the Gross NPA (GNPA) ratio for Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) could edge up from 2.3 per cent at the end of FY25 to around 2.3–2.4 per cent by March 2026. This follows a steady decline in GNPAs since March 2019, aided by regulatory support during the pandemic and a surge in recoveries, write-offs, and reduced slippages.

While overall asset quality remains robust, the report warns of potential fresh slippages stemming from unsecured lending and credit card debt. Private banks continue to report higher slippage ratios than public sector banks, largely due to their exposure to retail borrowers.

Despite improved asset quality in the services and retail sectors, rising household debt—42.1 per cent of GDP as of December 2024—and a shift towards consumption-led borrowing by subprime borrowers are emerging risks. The report notes that corporate deleveraging may help cushion the overall impact. *– ANI*

Bengaluru leads as US firms hit record office leasing in India

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

A report by JLL reveals that US companies achieved unprecedented office leasing volumes in India from 2022 to Q1 2025, with 2024 marking the highest annual activity on record. US-origin Global Capability Centres (GCCs) have substantially contributed to this growth, accounting for over two-thirds of corporate leasing activity in the country.

Bengaluru, recognised as India's Silicon Valley, dominated with 35 per cent of all leasing activity, reflecting the city's appeal across sectors beyond technology to include manufacturing and financial services. Hyderabad and Delhi NCR followed as the second and third most popular markets for US firms, with Chennai and Pune also experiencing notable interest.

JLL's findings indicate a diversification in India's value proposition, with GCCs in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector showing robust growth. Interestingly, Mumbai emerged as a key hub for BFSI GCC activity. This trend underscores India's increasing significance in the global office market and the pivotal role of US firms in shaping the commercial real estate landscape. *– PTI*

'India emerges as top investment destination'

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

A recent report from Colliers has said that India has positioned itself as a prime global destination for cross-border investment in land and development sites. Nation attracted USD 735 million in cross-border capital during 12 months ending Q1 2025, securing the seventh spot among the top ten global markets in this sector. Of this amount, USD 332 million was sourced globally. Although India's share in total cross-border investment is slightly declining, this figure surpasses its five-year average of 1.2 per cent. *– PTI*

India a global hub for managing complex tax ops

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) have emerged as key players in managing intricate tax operations for multinational corporations, including corporate tax, indirect tax, transfer pricing, and litigation, as detailed in a recent Deloitte whitepaper.

The report, titled "Transforming Global Tax Functions: The GCC Advantage," highlights that these centres provide strategic fusion of expertise, technology, and cost efficiency, enhancing global tax ecosystems.

Deloitte said that approximately 76 per cent of global companies already manage tax processes from India, with many setting up Centres of Excellence. Currently, India hosts over 1,700 GCCs, employing 1.9 million professionals and generating USD 64.6 billion in revenue by 2024. Major hubs include Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune. *—PTI*

YEARS OF SKY-HIGH INFLATION

Crisis looms as oil, energy prices rise amid Iran-Israel conflict

WASHINGTON, 14 JUNE

Israel's attack on Iran Friday has catapulted their long-running conflict into what could become a wider, more dangerous regional war and potentially drive prices higher for both businesses and households.

Oil and gold surged and the dollar rose as markets retreated, signalling a flight to investments perceived as more safe.

After years of sky-high inflation in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans have become increasingly leery about the economy this year due to President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs, though the impact so far has been muted.

The latest escalation in the Middle East has the potential to cause widespread price increases that could set consumers back again.

Here's a look at some of the sectors that could face an outsized impact from the escalation in the Middle East, and what that might mean for consumers.

Oil and gold surged and the dollar rose as markets retreated, signalling a flight to investments perceived as more safe

PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS

Energy

Oil prices surged Friday to their biggest gain since the onset of Russia's war on Ukraine began more than three years ago. If or when Israel's attack on Iran could impact gas prices, which have been in decline for nearly a year, isn't entirely clear.

Iran is one of the world's major producers of oil, though sanctions by Western countries have limited its sales. If a wider war erupts, it could significantly slow or stop the flow of Iran's oil to its customers. Energy prices have been held in check this year because production has remained relatively high, and demand for it low. A widening conflict could tilt that balance.

In the past, conflicts in the Middle East have sent energy price soaring for extended periods but in recent years, because of the huge supply of oil, those spikes have been more fleeting.

Earlier this month, the countries in the OPEC+ alliance decided to increase production again, which often pushes crude prices down. That usually means cheaper gas, of which there is currently a surplus.

Shipping

Shipping costs were already on the rise for a number of reasons. Cargo is being rerouted around the Red Sea where the US began conducting air strikes on Yemen's Houthis, the Iran-backed rebels who were attacking ships on what is a vital global trade route.

The window for companies seeking to ship goods before the year's end is coming to a close this month. A widening conflict in the Middle East would only drive prices higher as those companies jostle to get goods from overseas as geopolitical tensions in the region rise.

Shares of ocean shipping companies like rose sharply following Israel's attack.

Consumer goods

Higher energy prices can lead to elevated costs for a wide range of products because just about everything is made and transported using oil or natural gas.

Government data this week revealed that Trump's tariffs have yet to cause a broader rise in inflation.

Combined with the higher shipping and production costs that could result from the escalated Middle East conflict, prices will almost certainly rise further, analysts say.

Federal Reserve

Federal Reserve officials meet next week to make their next interest rate decision, and the vast majority of economists still think the US central bank will leave its benchmark rate where it is for the fourth straight time. The Fed has been juggling its dual mandate of supporting the labour market while keeping inflation at bay.

If prices go up, Fed officials may be inclined to raise its benchmark rate, raising borrowing costs for businesses and consumers. That could lead to businesses to cut jobs, particularly in the high-growth tech sector, and force Americans to pull back on spending, which drives more than 70 per cent of economic activity in the US.

Travel

Perhaps contrary to conventional wisdom, one cascading effect of the heightened Middle East tension may be that the cost of travelling, even if fuel prices rise, will come down.

Airlines have been downgrading their travel forecasts as businesses and families tighten their travel budgets in anticipation of tariff-related price hikes. Several major air disasters also have made some wary of getting on a plane. *– PTI*

Hardeep Puri PHOTO: PTI

Have adequate energy supplies, claims India

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Puri addressed energy supply concerns during a review meeting with key officials from Indian energy Public Sector Units. Puri assured that India has ample energy supplies for the coming months, a statement that takes on added weight amidst rising international oil prices resulting from recent geopolitical tensions involving Iran and Israel.

Currently, crude oil WTI futures have surged by six per cent to USD 72.04 per barrel. With India importing over 80 per cent of its crude oil, the government is striving to diversify its sources to manage costs effectively. Puri's statement underlines India's commitment to balancing energy availability, affordability, and sustainability. *– ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Mannat loses in pre-quarterfinals in Women's Amateur

NAIRN, 14 JUN

Indian golfer Mannat Brar made history by reaching the pre-quarterfinals of the 122nd Women's Amateur Championship, the best performance by an Indian in the tournament's history. After finishing 16th in stroke play, Brar won two matches to advance to the last 16. She defeated Germany's Uma Bergner 5 & 4 in the Round of 64 and staged a thrilling comeback against Ireland's Rebekah Gardner, winning on the 21st hole. However, her journey ended in the Round of 16 against Spain's Paula Francisco, where she narrowly lost after squaring the match earlier. Francisco will now face fellow Spaniard Paula Martin Sampedro in the quarter-finals. The winner will gain entry to prestigious tournaments, including the AIG Women's Open and the Augusta National Women's Amateur. *—PTI*

Talwar makes cut Rataiffeisenbank Golf challenge

BRNO, 14 JUNE

Indian golfer Saptak Talwar successfully made the cut at the Raiffeisenbank Golf Challenge, concluding his second round with a score of 1-under 70 at Golf Resort Kaskáda. With a combined score of even-par 142 across the two rounds, he is tied for 60th place. Talwar started strong with a birdie on his first hole and continued to perform well, scoring several birdies despite a few bogeys. The day saw Spain's Sebastian Garcia, England's Joshua Berry, Welshman Stuart Manley, and American Palmer Jackson sharing the lead with a collective score of 10-under par. Berry excelled with a stunning 7-under 64, showcasing a bogey-free round filled with seven birdies. *—PTI*

Judo player accuses coach of sexual harassment

NAINITAL, 14 JUNE

The Uttarakhand High Court has scheduled a hearing for 16 June concerning a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by a 19-year-old judo player who accuses her coach of sexual harassment during training sessions. The athlete, a national-level competitor, claims her coach Savita Gurung redirected her to another coach, Satish Sharma, who allegedly confined her at his farmhouse and harassed her on 12 March. Threatened with career sabotage when she resisted, she later suffered mental trauma, preventing her participation in national events. After filing an FIR on 28 April , the investigation was transferred to Bhojpur police. The PIL seeks a thorough investigation and penalties against the accused.*—PTI*

FIA suspends steward for Verstappen barb

LONDON, 14 JUNE

The FIA has suspended steward Derek Warwick for the Canadian Grand Prix following remarks he made about a penalty given to Max Verstappen. The governing body stated Warwick's comments regarding the penalty imposed on Verstappen for running George Russell off track were unauthorized. Warwick has since apologised for what he called "ill-advised" remarks and will be replaced by Enrique Bernoldi, who will officiate from Geneva for the weekend. Verstappen received a three-point penalty at the Spanish Grand Prix, placing him one point away from a one-race suspension. This incident marks the second steward suspension this year, following Johnny Herbert's dismissal in January for a conflict of interest after providing commentary on media platforms. Warwick is expected to return for his duties at the upcoming Austrian Grand Prix.*—PTI*

South African players celebrate with the winner's trophy after their win in the World Test Championship against Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London PHOTO: PTI

SA's 27-year drought for ICC trophy ends

Markram's ton helps SA beat Aussies at Lords to end a long chapter of heartbreaks

LONDON, 14 JUNE

South Africa won the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final in dramatic fashion, defeating defending champions Australia by five wickets at Lord's on Saturday. The triumph marked South Africa's first major ICC title in 27 years, ending decades of near-misses and heartbreak on cricket's biggest stage.

Resuming on 213-2, the Proteas successfully chased down the remaining 69 runs on the fourth morning to finish at 282-5 — the second-highest successful run chase in Test history at the historic venue.

Aiden Markram was the cornerstone of the victory, converting his overnight century into a match-winning 136. His six-hour stand at the crease ended with just six runs needed, caught at midwicket off Josh Hazlewood. The Australians, recognising his role in the Proteas' win, warmly congratulated him as the Lord's crowd gave a standing ovation.

The final moment came when Kyle Verreynne struck the winning run through the covers, sealing a landmark victory and sparking jubilant celebrations.

> **We got ourselves into the final, there were doubters on the route we took, this win squashes that. It's been a special couple of days, at some points it felt like we were in SA. We prepared hard, we came in with a lot of belief and lot of doubters, glad we played well**
>
> -Temba Bavuma, South Africa captain

South African captain Temba Bavuma, who added a crucial 66, partnered with Markram for a game-defining 143-run stand on Friday. Although Bavuma departed early on Saturday, edging Pat Cummins behind, the team remained composed. Tristan Stubbs fell to Mitchell Starc with 41 runs still needed, but by then the result seemed inevitable.

"We've come a long way as a team, as a country," said a visibly emotional Keshav Maharaj. "To finally get over the line after 25 years of pain is super emotional. Diversity is our strength, and lifting this trophy will unite our nation even more."

Australia, though relentless, struggled on a flat pitch. All three of their reviews were exhausted in the opening 90 minutes of play, and even the new ball failed to trouble the resolute South African batters.

This win is South Africa's first ICC trophy since 1998, when they won the then ICC KnockOut Trophy. Since then, the team had suffered several painful exits in major tournaments, including in Birmingham (1999), Dhaka (2011), Auckland (2015), Kolkata (2023), and Bridgetown (2024).

Critics had questioned South Africa's path to the final, citing an easier fixture list in the WTC cycle, having avoided series against Australia and England. However, the Proteas have now won eight consecutive Tests — their second-longest streak — with four of those victories coming away from home. With this victory, London 2025 will go down as one of the proudest moments in South African sporting history. *—PTI*

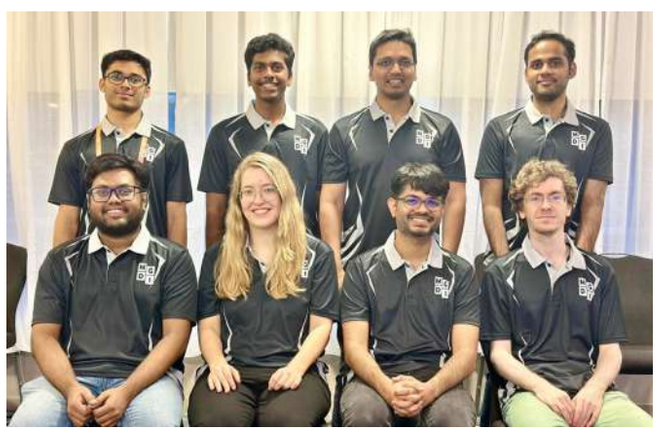
Team MGD1 1st Indians to win FIDE World Championship

LONDON, 14 JUNE

Team MGD1 etched its name in history by becoming the first Indian team to win the FIDE World Rapid Team Championship, clinching the title with 10 wins from 12 rounds over three days. Seeded sixth, the team triumphed after a tight battle with Team Hexamind, finishing with 21 points — one ahead of their closest rivals.

After securing silver and bronze in previous editions, MGD1 started strong with a flawless day one. A draw against Team Freedom and a loss to Hexamind on day two, however, left them needing a perfect finish. Rising to the occasion, they swept all four rounds on the final day.

The team featured Grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi, Pentala Harikrishna, Leon Mendonca, David Anton Guijarro, Tsolakidou Stovroula, Pranav, Atharva Tayade, and captain Srinath Narayanan. Key wins by Arjun and Pranav in the final round, particularly against Malcom's Mates, sealed the championship.



The team featured Arjun Erigaisi, Pentala Harikrishna, Leon Mendonca, David Anton Guijarro, Tsolakidou Stovroula, Pranav, Atharva Tayade, and captain Srinath Narayanan PHOTO: X/ChessBase India

"This is very special," said Narayanan. "With the Olympiad team we were favourites; here we were underdogs. And we won gold again."

World No. 3 Arjun bounced back from a poor day two, scoring 3.5/4 on the final day. His highlights included victories over GMs Jose Martinez and Luke McShane, and a hard-fought draw against GM Nihal Sarin.

Youngster Atharva Tayade shone on the recreational board, winning 11 of 12 games and helping MGD1 draw with Team Freedom after Arjun lost to Viswanathan Anand. *—PTI*

Arya-Arjun win Gold for India in 10m air rifle

MUNICH, 14 JUNE

India's Arya Borse and Arjun Babuta produced a thoroughly dominant performance and outplayed China's Zifei Wang and Lihao Sheng 17-7 to win the gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event of the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday.

Borse and Babuta were in fine fettle when it mattered the most to win the top prize in the prestigious tournament, not giving the Chinese an inch.

The Indian duo entered the gold medal round after aggregating 635.2 in the qualifications, just .7 behind Wang and Sheng (635.9), which is also the qualifications world record.

Individually, Borse managed 317.5 while Babuta shot 317.7 in the qualifications.

Borse had paired with Rudrankksh Patil to win the 10m air rifle mixed team silver in the World Cup in Lima, Peru, earlier this year.

The other Indian pair in the event, Elavenil Valarivan and Ankush Jadhav finished sixth in the qualifications with 631.8.

Norway's Jeanette Hegg Duestad and Jon-Hermann Hegg bagged the bronze medal with a 16-14 victory over the UAS's Sagen Maddalena and Peter Matthew Fiori.

This is India's fourth medal and second gold in the ongoing World Cup after Suruchi Singh's yellow mettle and the two bronze won by Sift Kaur Samra and Elavenil in their respective individual events earlier this week. *—PTI*

Sam Burns leads US Golf Open with 65

OAKMONT, 14 JUNE

Sam Burns carded a superb 5-under 65 on Friday to grab a narrow lead at the US Open, finishing at 3-under 137. Only three players remain under par on the punishing Oakmont course.

Burns admitted, "Every shot is difficult. It requires a lot of focus." Meanwhile, world number one Scottie Scheffler shot a 71, battling inconsistency, while Rory McIlroy endured a frustrating 77, complete with club flinging. Shane Lowry incurred a penalty after a mental lapse.

Thriston Lawrence fell from 6-under to 1-over and will finish his round Saturday with a crucial putt. Viktor Hovland's steady 68 puts him just two shots behind. Phil Mickelson, with a 74, risks an early exit in what may be his US Open swansong. *—PTI*

Late goals haunt India in 2-3 loss to Aussies in Pro League

ANTWERP, 14 JUNE

India's men's hockey team suffered its fifth straight defeat in the FIH Pro League, going down 2-3 to Australia despite leading by two goals midway through the match.

Having already lost twice each to the Netherlands and Argentina in the European leg, India started brightly against the Kookaburras and dominated the first two quarters. Abhishek scored a brace (8th, 35th minutes) to put India ahead, but a second-half Australian resurgence turned the tide. India were without captain and drag-flick specialist Harmanpreet Singh, who was rested due to an injury sustained in the previous match against Argentina. Still, they showed early intent, with Abhishek opening the scoring in the 8th minute after a neat setup by Manpreet Singh.

India missed a few opportunities to extend the lead, including a narrow miss by Abhishek and a saved penalty corner by Jugraj Singh. Goalkeeper Suraj Karkera was solid, pulling off key saves, including one against Joel Rintala in the 19th minute.

India doubled their lead in the 35th minute when Sukhjeet Singh won possession in the Australian circle and set up Abhishek, who struck a crisp reverse hit to score his second.

However, Australia responded strongly. Nathan Ephraums scored in the 42nd minute from a rebound, and Joel Rintala converted a penalty corner in the 56th minute to level the scores. With just 42 seconds left, Tom Craig deflected in Jeremy Hayward's flick off a penalty corner, sealing a dramatic comeback win for Australia. *—PTI*

Neeraj Chopra eyes victory at Paris Diamond League

PARIS, 14 JUNE

Neeraj Chopra is set to chase his first major title of the season as he returns to the Paris Diamond League on 20 June, eight years after his last participation. The 27-year-old Indian javelin thrower, who missed last year's event to focus on the Olympic Games in the French capital, last competed in the Paris DL as a junior world champion in 2017, where he finished fifth with a throw of 84.67m.

Although the full list of competitors has not yet been published, organisers have confirmed that Chopra and two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada are among five athletes with throws exceeding the impressive 90m mark. "Javelin throwers Neeraj Chopra, a double Olympic medallist, and Anderson Peters, a double world champion, are among the five entrants who have already crossed the 90m line in a competition that promises to be exhilarating," stated the organisers. Chopra's 2025 season began with a title win in an invitational meet in Potchefstroom, South Africa, with a throw of 84.52m. *—PTI*

IN VAULT GYMNASTICS

Pranati wins Bronze at Asian C'ship

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Indian gymnast Pranati Nayak clinched a bronze medal in the vault final at the 12th Senior Women's Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Jecheon, South Korea, on Saturday.

The 30-year-old, who had earlier claimed a bronze at the FIG World Cup in Antalya, Turkey, in March this year, scored 13.466 to finish third on the podium.

China's Yihan Zhang bagged the gold with a score of 13.650, while Vietnam's Thi Quynh Nhu Nguyen took silver with 13.583.

Young Indian gymnast Protistha Samanta also impressed, narrowly missing out on a medal with a fourth-place finish after registering a score of 13.016 at the Jecheon Gymnasium.

- With this performance, Nayak secured her third medal in the continental championships, surpassing veteran gymnast Dipa Karmakar's tally of two. She had previously won bronze in the vault at the 2019 edition in Ula anba atar and again in 2022 in Doha.

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Karmakar had won her first continental medal, a vault bronze, at Hiroshima in 2015 and followed it up with a gold in Tashkent earlier this year.

Nayak, a Tokyo 2020 Olympian, had posted a strong first attempt in the final, scoring 13.666, but a lower second vault of 12.866 affected her overall score.

She had entered the final after placing fourth in the qualification round with a score of 13.083. Protistha also made it to the medal round, qualifying with a commendable 12.916. *—PTI*

PALMEIRAS FACES CHALLENGE FOR FIRST FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP CROWN

SAO PAULO, 14 JUN

As the expanded Club World Cup kicks off in the United States this weekend, Brazil will field four teams, the most of any nation. For Palmeiras, however, the tournament is about more than participation; winning it would mean redemption for a club that has yet to secure a world champions' title.

Under manager Abel Ferreira since 2020, Palmeiras has claimed two Copa Libertadores titles along with various domestic honours, but remains haunted by the absence of a global trophy. Their local rivals—Corinthians, Sao Paulo, and Santos—have all lifted the title at least twice, which has led to years of memes and banter among fans.

Palmeiras qualified as the 2021 Copa Libertadores champions and will face tough opponents in the group stage: Porto, Al Ahly, and Lionel Messi's Inter Miami. The team's passionate supporters hint at a more realistic chance of glory later this year if they secure a fourth Libertadores title and advance to the shortened FIFA Intercontinental Cup format.

Historically, Palmeiras has had three unsuccessful attempts at a world title, with last-minute heartbreak in previous finals. The club remains optimistic as it prepares to take on Porto in East Rutherford, New Jersey, this Sunday. *—PTI*